



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

ART AND PROGRESS

VOLUME IV

OCTOBER 1913

NUMBER 12

SPECIAL NUMBER

INDUSTRIAL AND DECORATIVE ART



OVERMANTEL PANEL FOR A COUNTRY HOUSE DESIGNED BY VIOLET OAKLEY
EXECUTED BY THE ENFIELD POTTERY AND TILE WORKS

THE CRAFTSMAN AND THE ARCHITECT*

BY RALPH ADAMS CRAM

FELLOW OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

IN its last annual report the Committee on Education of the American Institute of Architects laid particular emphasis on the relationship between the architect and the craftsman, pointed out the almost complete lack of good artificers in America and the shocking disparity between educational agencies in Europe and this country, and urged upon the architectural profession the

paramount necessity of taking heed of the existing condition and the necessity of amending it without delay. The report said in part: "From time to time we have referred more or less casually to the fact that while we have the most copious and widespread architectural education to be found in any country, we have practically no agencies for the education of craftsmen. The result must

*A paper read at the Fourth Annual Convention of the American Federation of Arts, Washington, D. C., May 15 and 16, 1913.

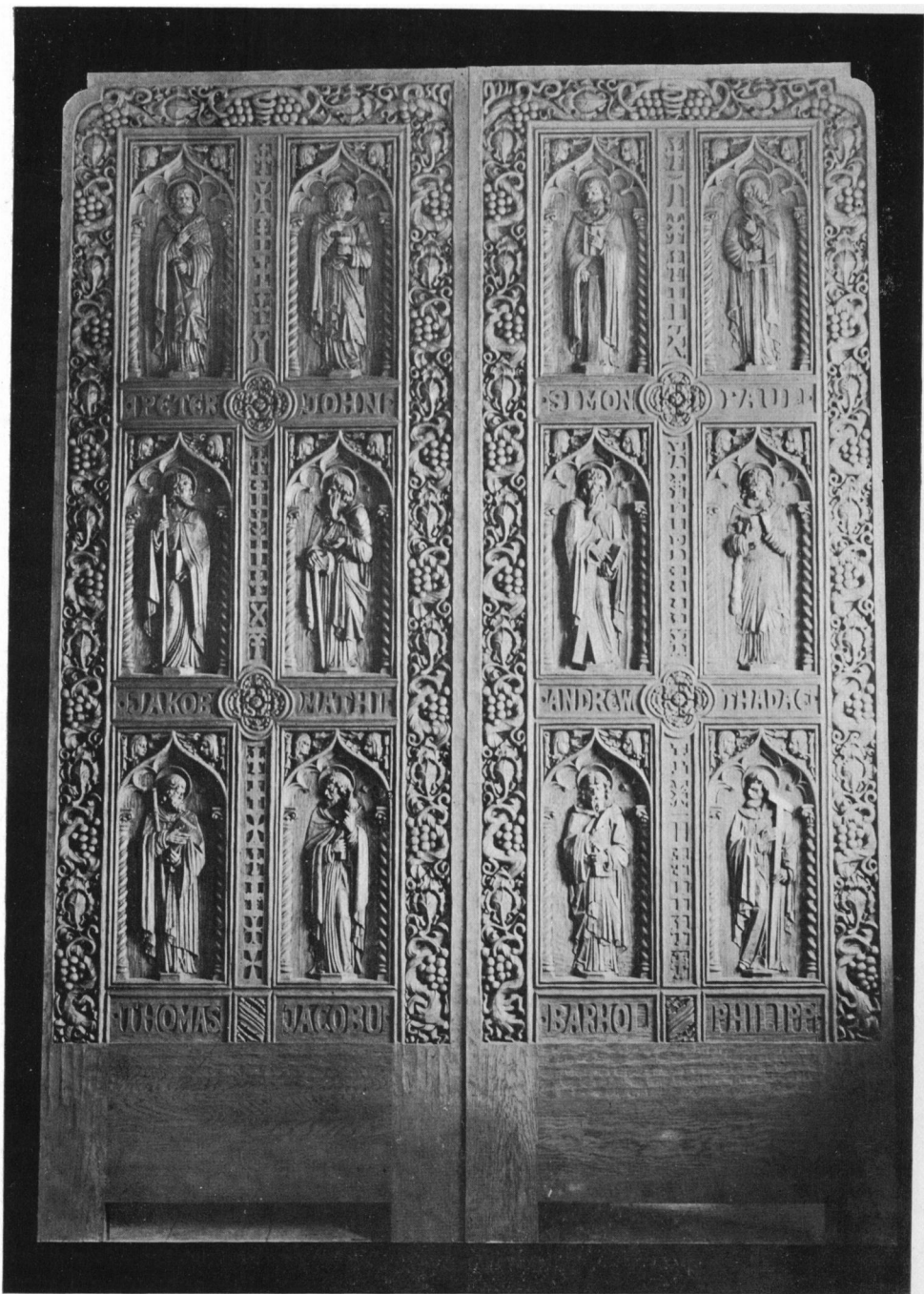
be, and is, extremely injurious, if not fatal, to architecture itself. We may on paper create visions that rival those of Coleridge's *Kubla Khan*, we may on rising from a weary drawing board, our creative task accomplished, say with Justinian (and believe ourselves in the saying), 'Solomon, I have surpassed thee,' but when we see our drawings and our designs materialized in three dimensions we realize that, were we buried within their walls, the globe-trotting New Zealander, a century hence, looking for our personal monuments would hardly say with Sir Christopher's eulogist, 'Circumspice.' In the good old days when an architectural monument was a plexus of all the arts, the architect was pretty much at the mercy of the craftsman, and he still is, with a difference, for then every bit of sculpture or painting or carving or metal work and joinery, and glass and needle work, when these latter came into play, enhanced the architecture, glorified it, and sometimes redeemed it as well; now either our carving is butchered, our sculpture and painting conceived on lines that deny their architectural setting, our metal work turned out by the commercial ton, our stained-glass work defiant of every law of God, man or architect, or it is all reduced to a dead level of technical plausibility, without an atom of feeling or artistry—and we are glad to take it this way for the sake of escaping worse.

"Every architect knows that the success or failure of his work depends largely on the craftsmen who carry it out and complete it with all its decorative features of form and color, and yet in a nation of 100,000,000 people with a dozen schools of architecture, practically nothing is done towards educating these same craftsmen, and we either secure the services of foreign-trained men, accept tenth-rate native work, or go without. Take a case in point: it is decided to build a metropolitan cathedral, with little regard to cost; plans are made (we will say satisfactorily), what then? If it is to be a great and comprehensive work of art it needs (and exactly as much as it needs its

architect) sculptors, painters, carvers in wood and stone, glass-makers, mosaicists, embroiderers, leather-workers. Are there enough schools in America to train all the craftsmen needed on this one monument; is there *one* school, and if so, where? One of the foolish arguments against Gothic is that it is quite dependent on artist-craftsmen, and as we have none we must abandon the style; one of the foolish arguments in favor of classical design is that anybody can learn to carve an acanthus, therefore we had better stick to what we know we can do. Neither argument is sound; if we have no artist-craftsmen then it would be better for us to close up half the schools that are turning out architects and employ the funds for the training of the only men who can give life to the architects' designs.

"Apart from the industrial arts in their relationship to architecture, their importance in this country, where art manufactures or products are so enormously in demand, is too obvious to need demonstration. Nearly all our expert labor in the artistic trades is imported from Europe. We pay large wages to foreign workmen, but refuse to educate our own people so that this financial benefit may accrue to them. In other words, our prosperity results in benefiting the alien, and we allow our own citizens to degenerate, furnishing no new employment for the rising generation, but fitting it only for those limited callings which are already overstocked, and in which it can command but a minimum wage."

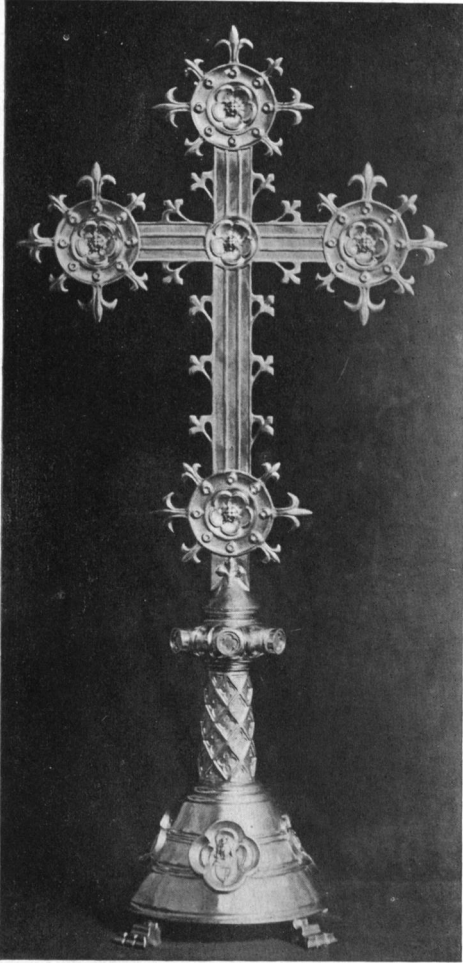
The report then summarized the educational activities of France so far as the arts allied with architecture are concerned, and although even there some of the most important crafts are as yet unrecognized, it appeared that in three alone there were in Paris 425 students with an annual budget of \$72,000. It then considered what is being done (or not done) in New York in the line of architectural modeling and painting, and, after showing its extreme inadequacy, it continued, "Now, if all this is true of architectural modeling and painting, it



CHURCH DOOR

CONTEMPORARY ECCLESIASTICAL WOOD-CARVING

I. KIRCHMAYER



CROSS

GEORGE C. GEBELEIN

GRACE CHURCH, PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND

is at least equally true of the other arts, such as wood-carving, the making of stained-glass and metal work of all kinds; obviously little is done educationally in any of those directions, and as a consequence when we want really good work we go abroad for it or employ foreign-trained men who have taken up their residence in this country. Some time ago a member of this committee was asked to give a list of artist-craftsmen who were competent in design and execution, and who were willing to work with due regard to the architectural environment of their products; he reported that there were two Americans who were

doing well as beginners in stained-glass, but that it would be safer to go to England where the ancient tradition in design and workmanship still maintains in a measure; he named two good sculptors in wood, one a Bavarian, one a German; one admirable iron-worker, a German; one goldsmith, an Englishman, and two architectural sculptors, one a Welshman, the other American.

"Of course, this is all wrong; there should be a hundred craftsmen in each category, if architectural dreams are to be properly materialized and embellished, and these should be our own people, not imported aliens, however competent they may be.

"It should be understood that we are not referring to the sculptor and painter as architectural allies; we have great men in both categories, and their relationship to the profession was considered by the Committee on Allied Arts of last year; we are speaking of the craftsmen whose work enters more intimately into the ordinary architectural practice, and, so speaking, we do not hesitate to say that the present state of things is barbarous, uneconomical, and in the last degree discreditable to the architectural profession."

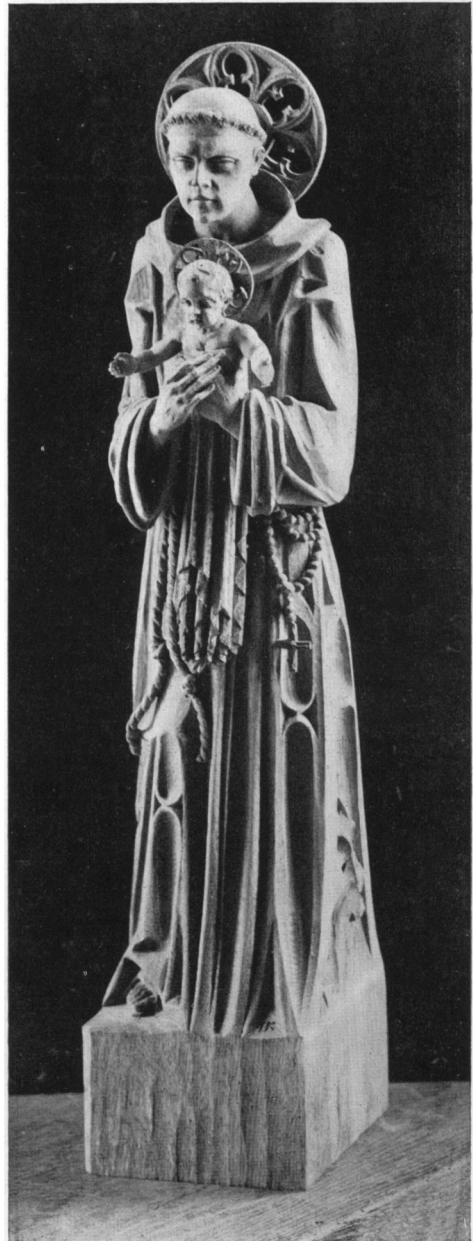
"Barbarous, uneconomical, and discreditable"—these words are none too strong to apply to a condition of things which has endured for long, and even now fails to arouse indignation, or even a measure of recognition. I could make a strong case against the present system, or lack of system, on economic grounds alone, showing how unpatriotic, unbusinesslike, and unpractical it is for America to deny to its own citizens a field of work that is remunerative and that must be filled, so putting a premium on the alien workman who has been able to acquire his dominant proficiency in his native and more generous land; a strong case also against the labor unions that disparage the apprentice system, and discourage the spirit of emulation that results in individual advancement and consequently increased returns to the specially able man; a strong case, finally, against a system that simply

means that for many products of the artist-craftsman the owner or architect must perforce go across the ocean, paying his money not even into the hands of foreign-born American citizens, but to foreign residents, and then paying his further tax as well to the National Government for the protection of American producers, who, so far as the essential element in the product is concerned—quality—simply do not exist.

It would be interesting to go into the matter in detail and show the barbarism and the dull ignorance of the present condition, but, for the moment, I must waive this and confine myself to the matter that more closely affects the owner and the architect, and that is the heavy handicap that is placed on everyone, lay or professional, who tries to create some work of art that shall be not only acceptable in idea, but even tolerable in its working out.

Now, why is it that in spite of the most complete and effective architectural education the world has ever known, as many practicing architects in the directory of a great city as all Europe numbered during the whole epoch of medievalism, and wealth that could buy the labor that built the pyramids, made Chartres Cathedral almost a revelation of Divinity and fretted the lacy fabric of the Taj Mahal—how is it that in spite of these notable advantages we can not succeed in matching a minor Greek temple, a second-class medieval monastery, or a provincial Buddhist shrine of twelfth century Japan? There are, I think, three reasons; the first two do not concern us at this moment, the third very much does. I name the two first, for nobody can stop me—our abandonment of definite and concrete and inspiring religious conviction and our disregard of the sound principles of law and order and obedience—and having named them, we shall hear no more of them at this time. The third is precisely that which is the subject of this paper, the disappearance of the individual, independent and self-respecting craftsman, and by this third loss, we are left helpless and hopeless, indeed, for as

the Renaissance demonstrates, the real craftsman can do much, as he did do much, to make amends for the loss of greater things, and, so long as he endures, as through the Renaissance he *did* endure, raise an inferior architecture to



ST. ANTON

I. KIRCHMAYER

CONTEMPORARY WOOD-CARVING



KNOCKER

SAMUEL YELLIN

a level of credit that in itself it could not claim, while giving to an equally inferior civilization a glamor of glory that rightly could not proceed from its own inherent nature.

We may sit spell-bound before the august majesty of the *École des Beaux Arts*, and to it by grace of a generous French Government we may send our boys by hundreds; we may found, equip, and endow schools of architecture in every college in America; we may rear architectural museums in every State, establish architectural lectureships that will subject the railways to an unfair test of their carrying capacity, and crowd the trans-Atlantic steamships with eager holders of traveling studentships—it will be of little avail if we can not entrust our dreams and our working drawings to genuine craftsmen for the carrying out, but instead find ourselves compelled to hand them over to the tender mercies of general contractors, “Ecclesiastical Art Decorators and Furnishers,”

and department stores where the watch-words are “efficiency,” division of labor, and “You give us sketches. We do the rest.”

By itself architecture is nothing; allied with the structural crafts and the artist crafts, it is everything—the greatest art in the world, for it is a plexus of all the arts, it assembles them in a great synthesis that is vaster than any art by itself alone, that gathers them together in the perfect service of God and man.

Without the craftsman an architectural design is worth little more than the paper on which it is drawn; it is an ephemera, a simulacrum of glory. From a distance, or at first sight, it may have majesty of form, power of composition, impressiveness of silhouette, and richness of light and shade, but close at hand, it is a dead thing, without a vivifying soul, and it neither reveals the heart of a people, nor eats itself into their affections, so that for them or their successors it becomes what to us to-day are the monuments of Greece and Byzantium and the Catholic Middle Ages. With the artist-craftsman, working independently but in close alliance, we may have again a San Marco, a Chartres, or a Seville—if as well, our faith and our works are as those of them that built those wonders and enriched them with their splendor of decoration.

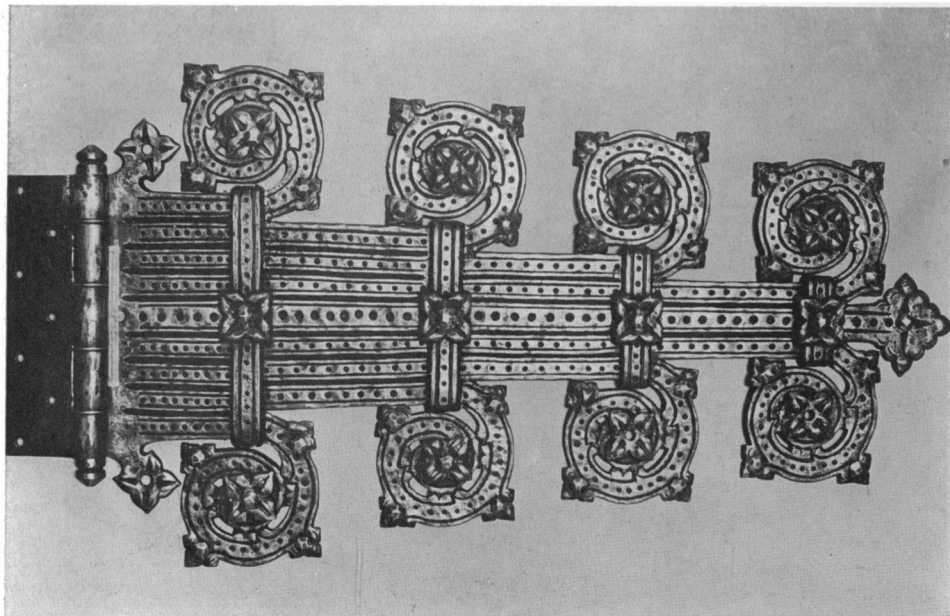
We exercise ourselves over the manifold questions of the faculties and the curriculums of the architectural schools in which we take such justifiable pride; we found one scholarship after another and incessantly multiply our architectural lectureships and exhibitions; we even animatedly discuss the possibility of that plainly desirable thing—a Post-Graduate School of Architecture in Washington; and all the while we see with equanimity our designs butchered or frozen to death, our ornaments and furnishings provided by others than our own people, and usually in a perfectly commercial and mechanical manner at that, and finally we are content that our buildings should become, not the rich and opulent showing forth of a great civilization through

innumerable allied arts, but instead academic essays in theoretical design expressing nothing but the genius—or otherwise—of the architect, even to the machine-chiseled carving, the stenciled color and the cast-plaster ornaments, all from his own full-size designs worked out by his own draughtsmen.

Think how the carved capitals of Lincoln, the statues of Wells and Rheims, the inlay of Monreale, the mosaics of Ravenna and the Trastevere, the glass of Bourges and Chartres, the frescoes of Assisi, the grilles and “retables” of Seville and Salamanca and Mexico, the joinery of the Chapel of Henry VII and of Toledo, the metal work of Nuremberg—consider how all these were made, and why and when, and then exult over our triumphant civilization, or marvel that all the wealth and the architects and artists of the world could not rival to-day or equal the Capella Palatina in Palermo which was merely the private chapel of a second-rate prince, in a frontier land in the dusk of the dark ages.

Of course, the basic reason for this deplorable condition of things is economic; it finds its roots in the fantastic

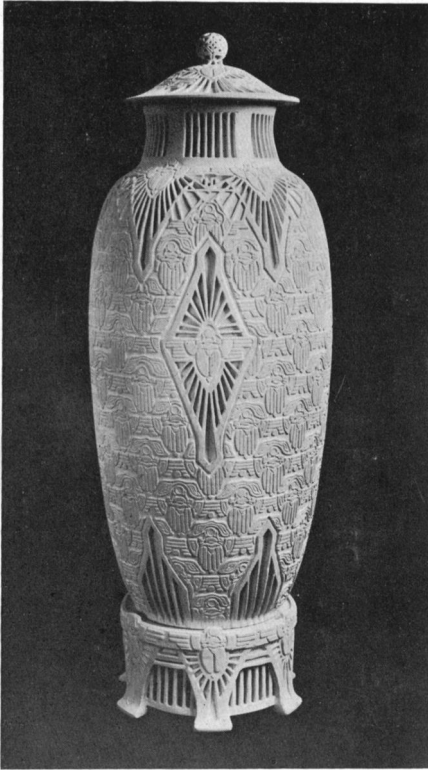
substitution during and after the Renaissance, in place of a communism that developed true personality, an individualism that destroyed personality. As the splendid liberty of medieval society has hardened into a mechanical and irresponsible despotism that preserves only the empty name of liberty, so the triumphant individuality of the Renaissance has hardened into an economic system that through mechanics, capitalism, and division of labor has become a very sordid kind of slavery. To effect a vital, comprehensive and enduring reform, we should have to strike deep and elsewhere than in the domain of art, but something can be done in a tentative and partial sort of way, pending the coming of that inevitable revolt and revolution that will “make all things new,” for, in minor ways, both the public that builds and the architect that serves this public are to blame. As a result of the economic revolution of the past three centuries the architect has fallen into the habit of thinking that architecture is all there is to architecture; that planes and contours and spacings of light and shade make up his art; that ornament and furnish-



STRAP HINGE

SYNOD HOUSE, CATHEDRAL ST. JOHN THE DIVINE, NEW YORK

BY FREDERICK KRASSER



SCARAB VASE

MRS. ROBINEAU

EXAMPLE OF EXCISED DECORATION

ings are adventitious anyway, and that, in any case, whatever is to be done by way of embellishment can best be done by highly specialized draughtsmen, under his own direction, with adequate photographs and reliable books and plenty of brown paper, charcoal and tube colors—together with a system of supervising the human and mechanical engines that turn these two dimensions into three dimensions during an eight-hour day and subject to the regulations of the labor unions.

Well, perhaps they can—as conditions now are, but if so we had better change the conditions. Just so long as the architect makes a blanket-contract with a general contractor, or turns over his carving and sculpture to a well-capitalized corporation of stone masons; or abandons his color decoration to some plausible organization of “Decorators,” or his church or palace to an august Fifth Avenue

establishment, or his windows and his metal work to an admirably advertised syndicate of artists with sufficient capital behind it to insure easy and pleasant conditions for all concerned, just so long will he produce nothing that will outlast his lifetime or give joy to anyone concerned.

For it is not a case of no alternative; there are real craftsmen living to-day, and in this country, and turning out exquisite work after the ancient fashion, though Heaven knows how it should be so. I know three makers of tiles and other products of burnt clay and glazes, who are consummate artists (one of them is a woman), and who are to be dealt with only as individuals, and who, if they are treated as allies, not as commercial purveyors of trade goods, can glorify any building with which they come in contact; I know two workers in forged and wrought iron who are blood brothers of Adam Kraft, three goldsmiths who would gladden the heart of Cellini, a wood-carver who is Peter Vischer restored to life, two sculptors who are really architectural sculptors as were the men who immortalized Chartres and Wells, a stone-cutter whose craft matches that of the masons of Venice and Rouen, a maker of stained-glass who needs only opportunity to restore some measure of the wonder of this lost art, a maker of ecclesiastical vestments whose needle-work is that of the fifteenth century, a scribe who can do real missals and other illumination as these once were done long ago. And not one of them has really enough to keep him busy or return him more than a living wage, while by default thousands of dollars worth of work they could do consummately goes weekly to factories and similar places where it becomes simply so much plausible sham.

Now it is the manifest duty of the architect to search out these individual craftsmen and to bring them into alliance with himself. You will note that I speak of an “alliance,” for this is almost the crux of the whole matter; whoever the craftsman is he must work with and not for the architect, although

the latter must exercise a general oversight over everything and form in a sense the court of last resort. Really an architect is, or should be, more a coordinator than an universal designer; he should be a kind of universal solvent, by means of which architectural designers, workmen-artificers, craftsmen and artists should come together, and, while preserving their own personality, merge their identity in a great artistic whole, somewhat as the instruments of a great orchestra are assembled to the perfect rendering of symphony by the master and conductor.

This free field for the exercise of personality was always accorded the artist and the craftsman during those greatest and most successful of building-epochs, the Middle Ages, and that it is now denied is due as much to the grasping nature of the architect as it is to the progressive degeneracy of the craftsman.

The two elements are interrelated; as the craftsman decayed, the architect more and more took into his own hands the work he could not get well done elsewhere, and as he did so he discouraged and destroyed the craftsmen already on the downward path.

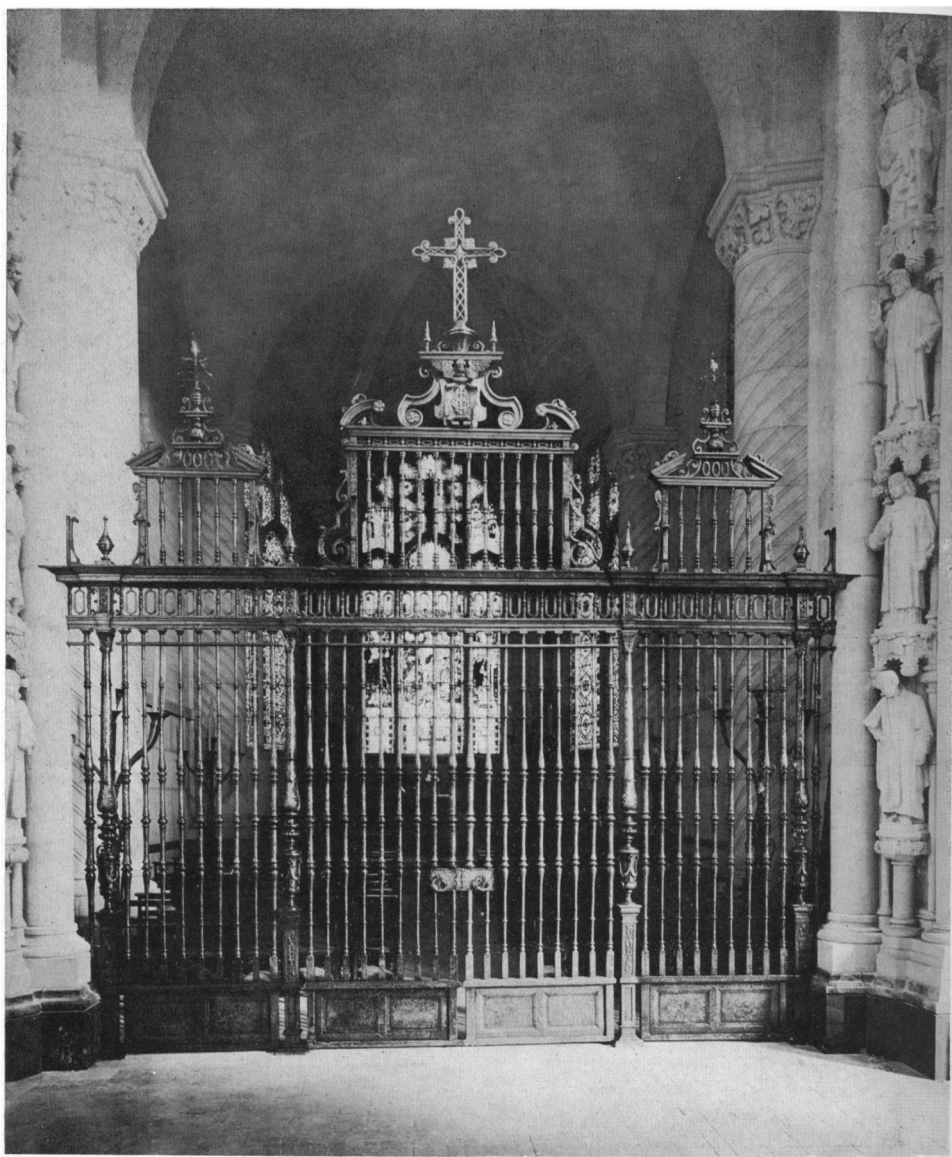
Now, there is no reason why the architect should have to design his carving and tiles and glass and metal-work and joinery and color decoration except that no one else can do it, and when he does, *faute de mieux*, the result is only a poor and unenduring expedient. Now that true craftsmen are beginning to emerge from the welter of commercialism, it is, as I have said, the manifest duty of the architect to search them out and give them, not only the preference, but the utmost measure of liberty of action of which they are worthy. What we are looking for, and what was always obtained in the epochs of high civilization,



FIREPLACE

MORAVIAN POTTERY AND TILE WORKS

SERIES OF SILHOUETTE TILES, ILLUSTRATING BIBLICAL SUBJECTS, SUCH AS WERE FORMERLY SET FORTH ON PENNSYLVANIA GERMAN STOVE PLATES



SCREEN AND GATE

CATHEDRAL ST. JOHN THE DIVINE, NEW YORK

SAMUEL YELLIN

is not merely technical proficiency, but such proficiency united to creative capacity. There is no true craftsman who is not the personal designer of what he fashions, and it is the negation of this principle that vitiates so much of the work produced through the so-called "Arts and Crafts" societies of the present day. For my own part I have lost much of my confidence in a movement

that once seemed to promise so much, just because I found there the same old vicious system—one man making the design, the other carrying it out. This is fatal, and I believe that the Arts and Crafts movement is doomed to immediate failure unless it prohibits the showing or selling or approval of any work that is not done by the man who designed it, or designed by the man who does it.

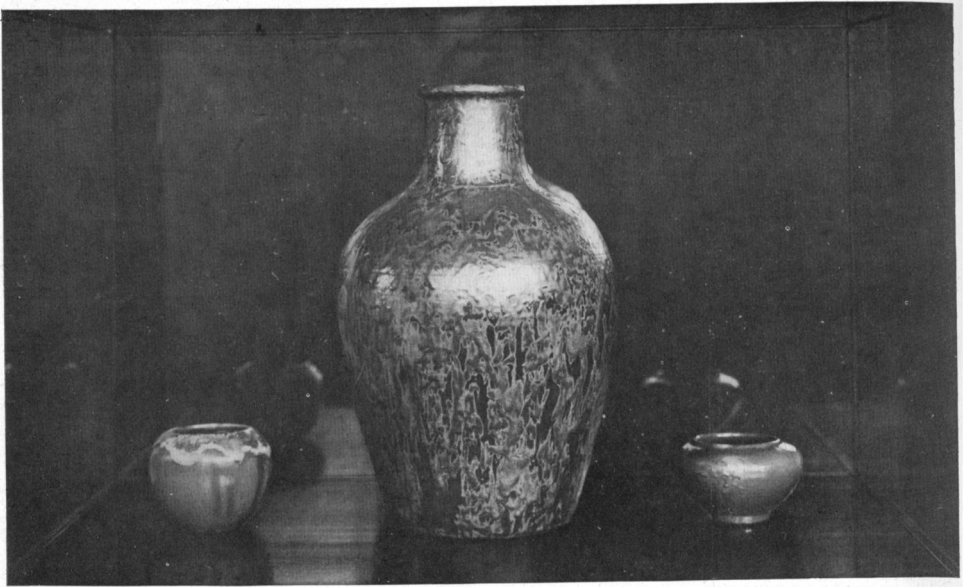
It is better to accept work that is in a measure defective if it is so created, than a more perfect and plausible product that involves division of labor. I have in mind a certain wood-carver who cuts his statues directly from barks of oak, without the intervention of either sketch or model, and though I am not always wholly in sympathy with his work, though sometimes there is a naïveté in what he does that would scandalize a trained sculptor or a purist architect, I would not change this for a moment, for, if I did, it would mean the achievement of efficiency and regularity at the expense of a better thing, and that is personality.

Of course, there are at present very few men who can be trusted implicitly, but there are many who have, or show promise of, actual genius, and such men should be encouraged and given the widest possible latitude. They will repay this confidence tenfold, and considerate guidance linked with confidence and opportunity will give surprising results. I should like to suggest, therefore, that a kind of "White List" be compiled and published, and added to from time to time, of those craftsmen who have shown the ability and the promise, that it be given the widest publicity amongst architects, and that they should consider themselves bound in honor to go to these men, and work with them, rather than over them, in preference to the more august and widely heralded concerns that commend themselves rather by their financial than their artistic capital.

In the end, and that we may finally get back to the old and ideal state of things, we shall have to restore the ancient guild idea, and the workshops as well, assembled around some great architectural undertaking. If a cathedral is to be built—or an university, or a public library—with the turning of the first sod should go the raising of temporary workshops, and the assembling of the varied workers that will be brought into play for the embellishing of the fabric. Think what a future cathedral-close might be—in the midst, the slowly rising walls, and all around busy workshops;

here a group of stone-carvers under a competent foreman (but minus special designers and modelers) surrounded by casts and photographs and drawings of the carving of Chartres and Rheims and Venice and Wells and Lincoln; here glass-workers, with their models from Bourges and Chartres and York, slowly fashioning, each man his own window, the jeweled filling for the tracerized apertures of the temple; here joiners and wood-workers with the same kind of surroundings, and workers in wrought and forged iron, and in gold and silver; tile-makers, with their Dutch and Persian and Spanish models, and so on, until all the varied list was filled. Each group would form its own independent guild, self-governing, self-controlled; all united, then, in a general guild which would have a broad supervision of all that was done, and provide models, books, teachers, while the architect himself would go daily through all the works, suggesting here, correcting there, inspiring everywhere. And with the primary craft-activity would go also certain social elements that would bind the several guilds together and give them co-ordination, educational elements, religious elements, and those features of assurance against loss through sickness and of participation in a division of profits, that were fundamental in the guilds of the Middle Ages. Can there be any doubt as to the result? If such a thing as that could come into being in connection with one great contemporary building, it would mean that the problem was solved and that for the future there would be enough real craftsmen and to spare.

You will say this is a dream impossible of achievement; that no owner would for a moment think of financing such a venture; that enough workmen could not be found to man any one of the workshops even if an adequate foreman could be obtained; that the idea of team work has so utterly died out of a hyper-individualized generation that a communal spirit could not be built up, and that such a scheme, if started, would immediately disintegrate through jealousy, sus-



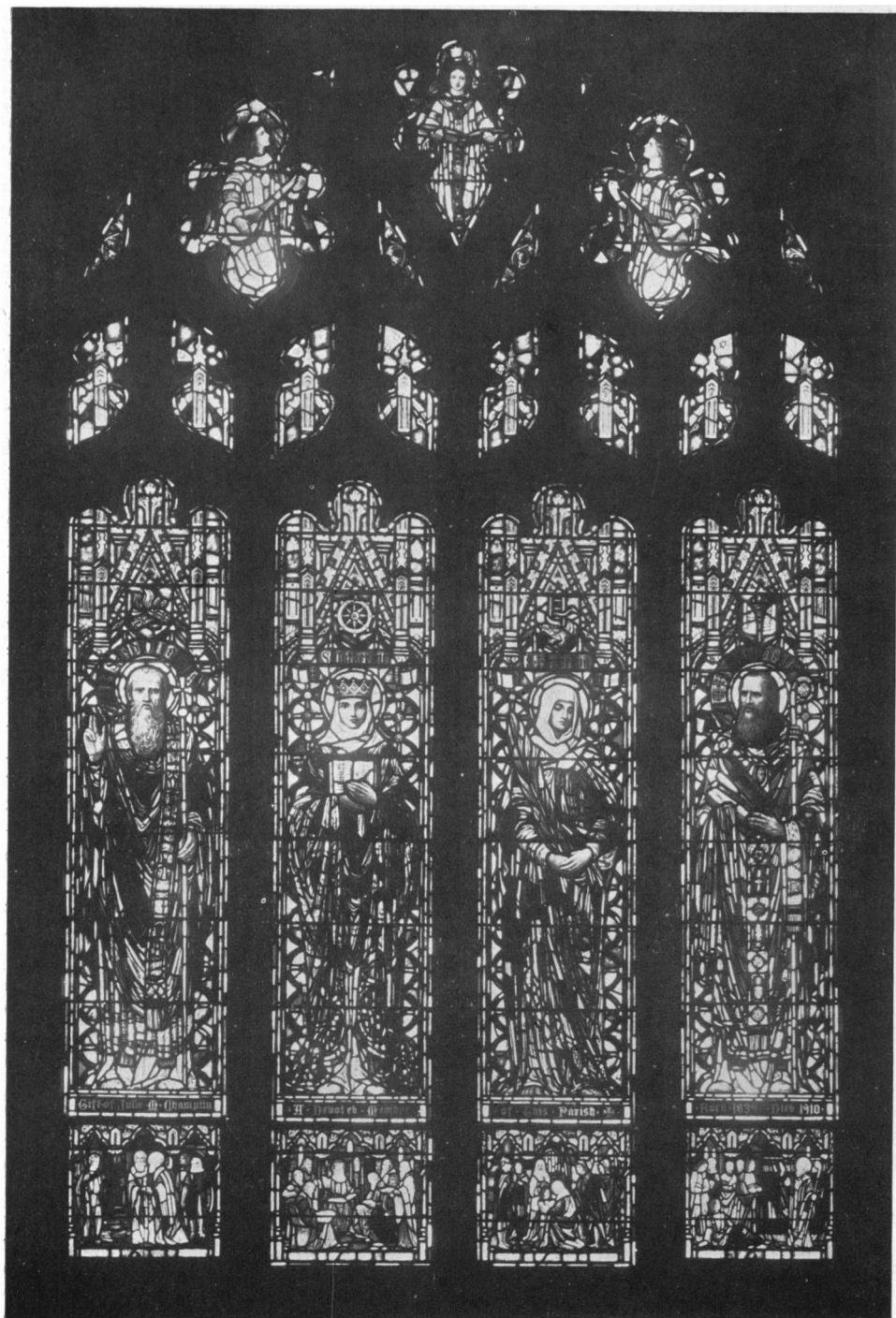
PEWABIC POTTERY PRESENTED TO THE DETROIT MUSEUM OF ART BY MR. CHARLES L. FREER

picion and avarice, and that finally the labor unions would refuse to permit anything of the kind, and would destroy it, if initiated, by the simple method of calling a strike amongst the laborers on the works but outside the guilds.

I admit the force only in the last claim and even here I think it is exaggerated. I can not believe that organized labor could be so short-sighted as to fail to see that such a scheme was quite in harmony with the high ideals it openly avows, and if it were, I am sure the time is close at hand when the growing force of public opinion will suppress with a heavy hand the corruptions of unionism which are so unrepresentative of, and injurious to, its better principles.

However this may be, the thing must come and will come, for we can not much longer submit to a condition so unwholesome and so deplorable in its results, or even to a type of civilization that makes this condition inevitable. If individualism or commercialism or division of labor or the trade unions stand in the way, they will be swept out of existence, going down in defeat before the revolution that will surely in its progress bring back again many of the old conditions that marked, as they will ever mark, estates

of high civilization. In the meantime, we can—and I close as I began—do much towards the amelioration of no longer endurable conditions, much even towards the bringing in of the great and fundamental reforms. I doubt if the State can do this, for its achievements in the line of popular education are not such as to enlist confidence; it is too blackly tarred with the same stick of secularism, mechanism and the division of labor. I doubt if the schools and colleges can do it, or would do it, but the architect can, and the owner, for both can make the demand and foster and further the supply. It is to them, therefore, that we must turn in our emergency; to the owner in the hope that he will demand real craftsmanship and accept no commercial or syndicated substitute; to the architect in the confidence that he will search out the individual craftsman, give him the preference, and accord him the greatest measure of liberty of which he is worthy—and even a little more. And in these hopes we shall not be disappointed, for once the condition is recognized there is no alternative—action, immediate, comprehensive and persistent, becomes a matter of honor.



TRANSEPT WINDOW DESIGNED AND MADE BY CHARLES J. CONNICK
ALL SAINTS' CHURCH, BROOKLINE, MASSACHUSETTS